

Space: The Initiating Frontier - Part 2

Written by Alex Baer

Tuesday, 06 March 2012 21:03

We must have had superpowers back then, in July, 1969, hurling so many tons into space, making a bull's-eye landing on the moon. It would be easy to think so. We look around today, see how fractured we are from one another, still fracturing more each day, split this way and that.

In the 60's we had to overcome our infighting and apply ourselves to defeat a common perceived threat: loss of leadership in the world, handing off to another country. In the two-thousands, the enemy is us, as Pogo long ago said. The enemy is also the shift from the all people in this land, to just some of the people.

In numerical terms, the One Percent has the 99 Percent up against the wall. Somehow, this is not yet perceived as a common threat to us all. If we had to duplicate the space race, given who we are now, we couldn't get half as far as Kansas. We have a sinful lack of vision. We have no unity, no urge to move in one good and solid direction, all of us, en masse. We prefer to die slowly as individuals, not unite for a better future, not pool all our energies and strengths in a good cause.

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It's not nostalgia's fault that we're standing today in a heap of rusted, crinkled metal, piled here and there, some chunks semi-attached in parts, creaking, twisting in the wind, swaying uncertainly, in the figurative graveyard of national dreams. Only human greed, slipped from human control, unharnessed and unhampered, can wreck the sort of destruction we now see in and on our home world -- anguish of all kinds scarred and gouged into us and our landscapes, scarred and gouged into familiar things worldly, spiritual, familial, and deep.

It is a total collapse and failure of vision, of leadership, of the courage required in making a new and better path. It is a failure to know what is good and important for a people, a nation, even for a species. That we should know we can grow and succeed, or that we can simply slow and come to a stop, fail to be -- and, *to do nothing at all with this certainty, to do nothing with this knowledge of how and who we are...*

This is as unforgivably ignorant and profoundly sad as we can usually be as flesh and blood beings, without the endless spilled blood and treasure of always insistent and consistent wars: the thing we always say we have no more need of, yet always rush and thrill to go start and have more of, to

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jumpstart and
us some more.

go get

In war, we waste what is, and divert what can be. In sitting idle, without vision, bereft of plan or dream or hope, we squander all our *could-and-might-bes*, waste all eventuality, we brush away from us whole worlds of possibilities, flush away from us whole futures, without even bothering to give a damn or try.

None of that is nostalgia's fault. It is our own fault, one we are to own. You get that bright, shiny penny -- or gold coin, or investment security, or stock portfolio, or municipal bond, or hedge fund report, or derivatives option, or some fanned-out and stunning array of financial instruments -- too close to your eye, it blackens and blocks out everything. It is absolute, it blocks out whole regions of even the vastness of space, it blocks out any whisper of soul, it blocks out all of the moon.

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If we are to grow, to boom and thrive into the future, and not just fidget forward or randomly ramble along unchartered, a new vision is required. It is vision sets our course as surely as does the elected voice among us that would describe a new arc of dreams, choose us a new course, explain in a loud and clear voice its importance, tell us succinctly or at length -- the prescription taken and referred to as needed -- why we need to go this new route. This is what an elected voice must do to engage us, to tell us about this new course, to *make it so*.

The desire to learn something new, the desire to do something amazing and never before done, the desire to reach and to grow -- these are all human nature, along with the *Haftas* and *Wanna*
s
, all
wrapped up in the well-grounded and
skyful
recipes of space.

Listen to and read some of JFK's speeches about space, you want to know what vision and being a leader looked like, sounded like, and were all about: He guided and informed and explained. He punched holes in our clouds, replacing watery wisps with backbone-stiffening

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iron and hardened-steel dreams of science. He took us by the hand and helped show us the way -- all the while helping us paint and trace our own notions and hopes on those broad, bright, new surfaces in dreaming never before part of any human scheme.

Nuts-and-bolts *doing* makes a big difference, when it comes to getting from here to anywhere -- but, without those grab-holds of vision, without providing the hand-holds where we could attach ourselves to those dreams, none of it would have gotten off the drawing board. Without the right human touch, none of it would have gotten off the artists' sketchpads, never would have kept lifting itself in countdowns, time after time, up and away from the engineers' launch-pads.

With the right human voice and touch, you can help coal-fired cultures, plants, and people start to dream about the cold fire of space, and reach where we grasp. It starts with a vision, and builds from there.

If we were even one tenth as great a people as we think ourselves to be in this country -- the formerly Greatest Country in the World -- we would stop screwing around down here. We are burning humanity's spare daylight, and the People's future and dreams, the longer we let One Percent traitors and selfish self-interests set our course to unending ruin, while they continue to obstruct and blockade any attempt to chart a better course for us all.

If we were worth even half a damn, we would roll up our sleeves and insist, and keep insisting until it all broke loose and came true, that we start a long-delayed Part Two of the WPA, start replacing our worn-out and aging fixtures, structures, and infrastructure -- start replacing and renewing our dreams. It's how we got to be Number One in the first place, everyone working and building a better future together for everyone -- not just for a select few.

The WPA was a great starter plan, one we can all build on. This time: We can include plenty of space in our dreams. We can get America and Americans moving forward again -- with a solid booster from behind, allowing us to stretch and reach for starlight.